

SUPPORT

SB0311 Nonpublic Education - Special Education Placements - Renaming and Teacher Salaries (Teacher Pay Parity Act)

What do we do now? Is there a school that will help Jeffrey? Will I have to homeschool him? Can Jeffrey learn? How do we help with all these deficits that I don't even understand? Those questions and more went through my head as the psychiatrist doing the psychoeducational testing explained that the testing showed my son was autistic. I was devastated. Educators did not tell us what our next steps should be. My husband and I were adrift to find answers alone.

My son was very lucky when we found Baltimore Lab School (BLS). Before entering this confusing world of having a child with special needs, I did not know that MANSEF schools like BLS existed to serve children whose needs cannot be met within the public school system.

I was immediately blown away by the way in which BLS embraced and seemed to easily understand what supports to put in place to teach and help Jeffrey. Throughout the past 6 years, they have always been undeterred, creative and flexible in providing him exactly what he needs to become a productive member of their school community. The staff at BLS has also helped my husband and I to acknowledge and celebrate even the tiniest victories throughout all of the challenges.

I am grateful every single day that he has a safe, welcoming, supportive, and appropriate learning environment where he has truly gifted teachers, counselors, administrators, OTs, and speech therapists. They have made all the difference in the world for Jeffrey and our whole family.

My hope is that schools like BLS will continue to meet these needs for future families and children. Without SB0311 which would bring salary parity of these hard-working teachers to that of their public-school counterparts, BLS and other MANSEF schools are facing extreme staffing shortages and possibly worse. For a better future for Jeffrey and to make sure schools like BLS are able to continue this invaluable work for years to come, please vote to support SB0311.

Thank you.

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